



NEWS RELEASE

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Rel. No. 7-27-2006
July 20, 2006

‘VILLAGE’ WILL OFFER UNIQUE TRAINING SITE

By Anna Morelock
Staff writer

A new town is popping up on Fort Riley, right in the middle of a war zone.

Right now the streets are dirt and contain ruts of mud after a rain.

On the edge of town, a farmhouse overlooks the 28 buildings situated just down the road.

A bulldozer drives past the church, the steeple of which offers a view unparalleled in the budding town.

Down the road from the church, past the clinic and two warehouses, hard hats peek out over the unfinished roofs of townhomes as workers finish up the concrete structure.

Unlike the new housing areas and unit headquarters under construction across Fort Riley, “Victory Village” won’t be populated with incoming troops and families. It will become a war zone.

The village, known as a Combined Arms Collective Training Facility, is one part of the \$14 million plus urban operations assault course being built on post. After events in Mogadishu in 1993, which many people remember from the book and movie “Black Hawk Down” based on the event, the Army realized it was ill-equipped and ill-trained for urban assault operations, said CACTF “Mayor” Darryll Becker. That’s when they came up with the plans for the five-part urban assault course.

The four other sections of the course include individual training, breach facilities, a shoothouse and urban offensive and defensive building. “Victory Village” is a culmination of everything the Soldiers will have learned up to that point, except at the CACTF they’ll be able to throw in tanks, infantry, combat vehicles and actually approach a small town and run through a complete engagement, Becker said.

After the individual weapons portion of the course, Soldiers will move to the squad level where they will learn to breach doors and windows using explosive charges. The breach facility, going in at Range 52, will consist of facades with easily replaceable doors and windows made of material such as drywall or plywood. By using such materials, the openings can be blown, cleaned up and replaced without damage to the structure.

At the shoothouse on Range 5, Soldiers will get the chance to clear rooms and engage targets in a live-fire environment. The urban offensive and defensive building going in at Range 4 will let Soldiers clear rooms, learn how to properly clear tunnels in the tunnel trainer, blow doors and windows and rappel from roofs.

“Victory Village” contains elements of all of the previous course sections on a larger scale. Besides the farmhouse, church, clinic, warehouses and townhomes, the village boasts a bank, jail, hotel, government building, single family homes and a maintenance garage Soldiers can use to park vehicles and fix them, if need be.

Behind the church, headstones will mark the town cemetery. Beyond the cemetery, a larger expanse of grass will serve several purposes. A water line running to the town needs to be run once in awhile to keep the water from getting stagnant, Becker explained. To keep that from happening, the water will be used on the soccer field, which will also double as a landing pad for helicopters.

Under the town streets, a tunnel system 4.5 feet in diameter adds more complexity to the village.

The concrete buildings, each adorned with a stripe of colored block in red, green or blue on the outside, are mostly empty on the inside, other than the occasional dirt clod or crusted bird dropping. Looks, however, can be deceiving. One of the “furnishings” placed in each building are shelves built into the corners of the rooms to house speakers and video cameras that will tape the training Soldiers’ progress throughout their mission.

The speakers will emit the sounds of the training unit’s choice. It’s really up to the units how elaborate the training in “Victory Village” can become. “Your scenario is only limited by your imagination,” Becker said.

The speakers can pipe in explosive noises or just the normal sounds of town life.

On the opposite side of town from the farmhouse, the control building sits next to two other out-of-play buildings. The control building is where Becker will act out his mayoral duties and where other workers will control town “life.”

In one room, the town controllers will run the cameras and other parts of the town. On the other side of the wall, commanders will be able to watch their troops’ progress on television. Down the hall, risers and projection screens will accommodate troops as they go through their after action reviews.

Like any growing town, “Victory Village” has had some roadblocks, but “it’s moving along pretty well now,” said Roy Vaughn with the Army Corps of Engineers. The town is

being built in two phases, divided by buildings. Phase one is scheduled to be complete at the end of July and phase two at the end of October.

Of course, unlike the new buildings, "that's not set in stone," Becker said.